

Connecticut Preservation Action

Housing Committee Public Hearing – Tuesday, March 1, 2011

In Opposition to House Bill 6052 An Act Concerning Supportive Housing

Sen. Gomes, Rep. Butler, and members of the Housing Committee: I am Anita Mielert, president of Connecticut Preservation Action and former First Selectman of the Town of Simsbury.

House Bill 6052 has a laudable goal of creating more supportive housing units however Connecticut Preservation Action and our members are concerned about its effect on historic rehabilitation projects around the state. The three Connecticut Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit measures cover a gamut of projects of various sizes and shapes, in all types of locations.

Some of our projects include supportive housing already. A prime example is The Hollander at 410 Asylum in Hartford, just across Bushnell Park from this building.

But, while we sympathize with the concept of developing a wider array of housing to address chronic homelessness, this bill is so broad as to create problems with the majority of projects.

- Why would you require supportive housing in an area where there is no transit?
- Some of our projects are as small as four units, and 10% is a meaningless figure.
- What continuing support services will be offered to the tenants?
- Many of our projects are now mixed-use, and CPA is promoting a bill which would open up the projects to a wider array of uses, some of which would be incompatible with supportive housing.

Financially, our tax credits are meant to be gap funding, a subsidy which encourages a developer to take on a project which has beneficial qualities but which might not be financially viable otherwise. If you burden the project with an unfunded mandate, you negate the intent of the tax credit in the first place. Also, our state tax credits are not paid out until a project is completely finished according to architectural standards. Your bill would require a substantial investment by the developer, up front, which would not be covered by the current funds available.

We cannot ask developers to do this with no supports and rent subsidies, no matter how lofty the goal. This is a time when we are trying to concentrate state resources on job creation, and historic restorations do that more effectively than new construction. This proposal if it were to become law would most certainly stop many projects from moving forward and because of that we strongly oppose its adoption.

Anita L. Mielert, President ♦ 57 East Weatogue St., Simsbury, CT 06070 ♦ 860-658-1190
Laura Knott-Twine, VP. ♦ Jack Shannahan, Treas. ♦ Mary Falvey, Sec.